

We claim:

1. An active connectivity module representing a node in an industrial control network comprising;

a housing;

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first and second bus data connectors mounted to said housing and providing connectivity to a data bus of said network;

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a plurality of device data connectors mounted to said housing and each associated with an input device or an output device;

a central processor unit connected to said network and to said data bus and input devices or output devices by means of said device data connectors; and

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a memory module coupled to said central processor unit and removably mounted on said housing, said memory unit in signal communication with said central processor unit, said memory unit storing at least address data representing the address of a network node with which said module is associated, and network configuration data including data sheet parameters associated with said node.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said device data connectors comprise a plurality of data connectors associated respectively with corresponding input devices.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said device data connectors comprise a plurality of data connectors each associated with an output device.

4. The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said device data connectors include a plurality of data connectors each associated with an input device whereby said module is capable of communicating with both input devices and output devices.

5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said address data includes data representative of the node address, the MAC identification, and an IP address associated with the address of said node.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said data stored in said removable memory unit comprises the network configuration parameters including data sheet parameters, GDS parameters, network system parameters, TCP/IP configuration and DHCP server information.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein said data stored in said removable memory module includes storage and maintenance data, including an error log and initial startup parameters and date and time data.